

Written Testimony Supporting
Proposed House Bill 7285, An Act Concerning Complaints That Allege Misconduct By Law Enforcement
Agency Personnel

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on
Judiciary:

My name is Kenneth Speyer. I am a resident of New Britain, Connecticut. I am submitted this testimony in
support of Proposed House Bill 7285, which intends to ensure compliance with the provisions of section 7-
294bb of the Connecticut general statutes concerning the acceptance, processing, and investigation of a
complaint from a member of the public relating to alleged misconduct committed by law enforcement agency
personnel.

As an attorney and as a member of the Board of ACLU-CT, I am very aware of the importance of effective
police complaint procedures. These procedures make good police departments even better, enable local
police chiefs or supervisors to provide additional instruction or guidance to those officers who may need it, and
perhaps most important, build public confidence and trust in those who are sworn to serve the public. This
leads to greater citizen cooperation with police, making the police more effective in serving their communities.

Section 7-294bb was a good start, and Proposed House Bill 7285 will make it more effective. I urge this
honorable Committee and the full General Assembly to go further, and amend this important bill to make police
complaint procedures even more effective. I am proud that the police department in my City of New Britain is
complying with both the letter and spirit of section 7-294bb, but a recent survey by the ACLU of Connecticut
clearly shows that many Connecticut police agencies still make it difficult for members of the public to obtain
information regarding complaint forms and processes easily. Many departments refuse or discourage
anonymous complaints, in violation of state law, or hinder the complaint process in other ways.

I urge you to amend H.B. 7285 to:

1. Establish meaningful penalties for law enforcement agencies that do not comply with state complaint
acceptance and investigation laws. We have seen how statutory penalties made the difference in collecting
racial profiling statistics.
2. Create a standardized complaint form that is compliant with best practices and translated into all
commonly-spoken languages in Connecticut. This will make it easier for citizens, who may obtain a form in
one town, for use in another. The form should make clear that submitting the complainant's name is
optional, and that no notary or other formality is required.
3. Require law enforcement agencies to track complaint data and to annually report specific complaint
information to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

Establishing a transparent, accessible police complaint process is necessary for creating a truly fair and just
police force in Connecticut—one that all community members can trust and depend on. Amending H.B. 7285
will encourage the community's faith in the police complaint process and ensure that we are holding our law
enforcement agencies accountable.

I urge the members of this committee to amend and support Proposed House Bill 7285.

Thank you.

Kenneth Speyer
13 Audubon St.
New Britain, CT 06053-2511
attyspeyer@comcast.net